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THE CHANGING FACE OF TERRORISM

BY

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ABSTRACT

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As the current century draws to a close, the United States faces an unprecedented and increasingly dangerous threat from asymmetrical organizations. These groups have the potential to inflict unprecedented damage to U.S. citizens, property, and vital interests. The threat of terrorist violence is not a new phenomenon; however, as we enter into the new millennium the threat from this enemy will become significantly more deadly. As the global strategic environment has changed since the end of the Cold War, the nature of asymmetrical threats, terrorism in particular, has changed just as dramatically. History provides a foundation to examine this change, predict future trends, and identify the new breed of terrorism and the terrorists that will threaten U.S. security and interests.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
THE CHANGING FACE OF TERRORISM	1
TERRORISM DEFINED	1
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW	2
TERRORISM: Y2K AND BEYOND	17
CAPABILITIES	17
TERRORISM'S NEW BREED	22
CONCLUSION	25
ENDNOTES	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY	30

THE CHANGING FACE OF TERRORISM

As the current century draws to a close, many security strategists believe the United States faces an unprecedented and increasingly dangerous threat from asymmetrical organizations. These groups have the potential to inflict tremendous damage to U.S. citizens, property, and vital interests. However, the threat of terrorist violence is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, while terrorism has been a threat throughout history, as we enter into the new millennium the threat from this enemy will become significantly more dangerous. It is the evolutionary nature of terrorism and how it is currently changing and adapting that will make it the greatest threat facing U.S. security in the future.

TERRORISM DEFINED

If indeed terrorists and their associated threat are the most dangerous adversary to the U.S. in the coming century, it is fundamentally important, from a definitional perspective, that the concept of terrorism is clearly understood by all key governmental agencies. A 1997 Government Accounting Office (GAO) report to Congress on federal agencies' efforts to implement national counterterrorism policy and strategy revealed that the very agencies tasked to implement the national strategy defined the term "terrorism" differently. Most surprising perhaps is that the two lead agencies responsible for policy implementation, the State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigations

(FBI), were not in agreement in either their basic definitions nor in how they viewed its scope. Furthermore, these same agencies, along with the Department of Defense and the intelligence community, also used different terms to describe their programs and their activities for combating terrorism.¹

Ambiguity of this nature and at such a level is more than surprising, it is simply unacceptable. If the threat of terrorism is indeed viewed as America's "Soviet Union" for the new millennium, as it has been characterized in terms of danger to U.S. citizens' vital U.S. interests, it is essential that all federal agencies concerned have the same clear understanding of the concept. Before we are able to truly assess just how great a threat "it" is, and exactly whom "it" threatens, we must do a better job collectively of determining and defining what constitutes terrorism. For the scope of this paper, the official and time-tested definition of terrorism used by the FBI will suffice. Terrorism is therefore defined as:

The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social goals.²

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

On 26 February 1993, a bomb exploded at the World Trade Center in New York and killed six persons and injured more than 1,000 others. President Clinton and his administration had

barely been in office a month and he had already come face to face with what he has referred to as the most dangerous enemy facing U.S. security.³ Despite the publicity surrounding terrorists this decade, terrorism is not a new phenomenon to either America or Americans. For one to predict the future, it has been said that one must first understand the past. With this in mind, it is therefore appropriate to first look at terrorism in the United States from a historical perspective before attempting to predict its place in the future.

In the middle of the twentieth century, primarily because of its preeminence and democratic principals, American diplomats, businessmen, and military personnel became targets for political violence around the world. Before the late 1960s, international terrorism was primarily confined to different ethnic or separatist groups such as the Basques.⁴

Terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens during this period largely occurred in Latin America, South America, and the then relatively unknown country of Vietnam. However, they did not lead to the U.S. developing a specific program or policy to combat terrorism. In fact, these attacks were not categorized as terrorism nor were those who committed them generally or consistently referred to as terrorists. They were most often called guerillas, bandits, thieves, and rebels.⁵

As the specific political goals of some groups became more well known, they were defined as urban guerillas, insurgents, and

revolutionaries. These groups that we would now see as terrorists, and whose actions we would define as terrorism, were simply seen as participants in wars of national liberation. The Kennedy administration did in fact develop policies to aid U.S. allies in fighting these conflicts and their associated insurgents, but they were in no way tied to terrorism.

These groups often used the same tactics as used by modern terrorists, shootings, kidnapping, hostage taking, and bombing. The frequency of these acts in the late 1960s led then U.S. Secretary of State Rogers to say, "The kidnapping of foreign groups for ransom purposes is a phenomenon new to the history of international relations."⁶ Their targets, however, were generally tied to small geographic areas and attacks were usually very selective.

These groups' actions were all coupled to their goal of bringing attention to their political causes, and intimidating and eliminating their opponents. Further, they anticipated that by creating instability in the targeted government, fewer freedoms would be afforded the general population. Thus, it was their hope that through creating such an environment, the masses would mobilize against the politically weak and oppressive standing government of that country.⁷

In the early 1970s, it became clear that international terrorism had evolved into a different kind of threat than that prevalent during the previous two decades. These terrorist

groups were more ideological in personality. Groups such as the Red Army Faction in West Germany and the Red Brigade in Italy became increasingly active in their vendetta directed against "imperialist" targets in Western Europe. Groups in Palestine such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) also emerged as increasingly dangerous threats.⁸

The prevailing anti imperialist philosophy shared by many of these groups, especially the Red Army Faction and the PFLP, resulted in the beginnings of what was to become a loosely formed terrorist group alliance. Suddenly, terrorism had evolved into something far more potentially dangerous than the Latin American guerillas of the 1960s. Now for the first time, terrorist groups shared more than their ideological foundations, they also shared training, weapons, and intelligence. They even combined forces and participated in joint attacks much like one would expect from a more conventional combined force.⁹

While the results of terrorism were being felt in both Western Europe and the Middle East during the 1970s, U.S. government personnel and property were attacked infrequently. For most Americans, terrorism was nothing more than a footnote during the evening news. In 1979, however, for many Americans all that changed. When Iranian students and the Revolutionary Guard seized the U.S. Embassy and its diplomatic personnel in Teheran, it altered the pattern of terrorist attacks and American

involvement with terrorism that would carry over into the next century.¹⁰

By 1980, attacks and abductions on U.S. diplomats significantly outnumbered those incidents involving American businessmen.¹¹ This was in sharp contrast to the previous decade. In fact, Americans in general had become the targets of choice for many terrorist organizations. First, as diplomats, businessmen, military personnel, and tourists, Americans were highly visible throughout the world and were therefore, highly accessible. Second, the high concentration and international reach of American media ensured that the responsible terrorist group would receive the highest possible exposure. Third, U.S. targets provided significant symbolic value to a large number of terrorist groups. This was primarily due to their belief that the U.S., as a representative democracy, would be more likely to respond to public pressure and therefore, more vulnerable to terrorist coercion. Furthermore, democratic states such as the U.S. were viewed as the primary obstacles of the ideological and political objectives of many terrorist groups. Finally, because the U.S. lacked an effective and coherent policy for combating terrorism until the middle of the century, there was little relative cost associated with targeting American citizens or interests.¹²

In the early 1980s, there were other terrorist trends that emerged which led to both increases in frequency and success. The

taking of the U.S. Embassy in Teheran marked the first real example of state-sponsored terrorism being used against the U.S. Thus, as the new decade began, terrorism had become a weapon not only of isolated groups, but also of nations.¹³ This is not to suggest that states had not assisted terrorist groups in the past. On the contrary, radical factions such as the PLO had received state assistance since the late 1960s. Direct state involvement was a new phenomenon that resulted in the United States beginning to identify these states as threats. Numerous groups received state support during this time period including Shiite groups in the Middle East and Africa, radical Palestinians, Latin American insurgents, European separatists, and the Japanese Red Army.¹⁴

From 1980 onward, the other primary source of terrorism was the regional influence of the Islamic fundamentalist revolution that took place in Iran. The Islamic radicals branded the U.S. as a symbol of hatred and Western imperialism and their calls for militancy and martyrdom provided a strong incentive for similarly minded individuals in the region.¹⁵

There was no other country where this incentive took hold any stronger than in Lebanon. It was in Lebanon, in 1983, that a Lebanese Shiite Muslim group made the threat of terrorism very, very real to the American people. For it was then when a terrorist bomb ripped through the U.S. Embassy and the Marine barracks in Beirut taking the lives of 305 Americans. However,

this was not to be the only time Americans would be baptized by terrorist fire during the decade.¹⁶

During the period 1984 through 1988, a series of kidnappings were successfully executed, to include William Buckley, the CIA head of station. By 1985, following the hijacking of TWA flight 847, it was becoming more and more apparent that the instigator for the majority of Middle Eastern terrorism was Iran rather than Syria or Libya.¹⁷ Regardless of the source, it was clear by the middle of the decade that terrorism was a far more significant threat to Americans and to U.S. interests than when it started.

Terrorist activity was not limited to the Middle East in the 1980s. In Latin America, Cuba and Sandinista Nicaragua were both actively supporting terrorism both in their region as well as internationally. Americans, particularly oil companies, became terrorist targets for both economic and political reasons.¹⁸

Terrorist groups effectively attempted to disrupt and destabilize legitimate governments as well as cause economic disorder by destabilizing foreign investments. In particular, the Sendero Luminoso in Peru and the national Liberation Army in Columbia were extremely active during this period. Later in the decade the terrorist problem became even more complex as drug traffickers, illegal arms dealers, and terrorist organizations began to effectively interact and coordinate their efforts. In 1989, although only 24 percent of the world's total terrorist

incidents occurred in Latin America, 64 percent of attacks against American citizens and property occurred in the region.¹⁹ As the decade of the 1980s came to a close, it was more and more apparent that the threat of terror was not confined to a far off country, but was in fact coming closer and closer to home.

Before one can fully understand the nature of terrorism in the 1980s, he must go beyond simply reviewing the major historical events during the decade. The form of terrorist attacks must also be considered in any complete analysis. In the 1980s, terrorist attacks took on one primary form that was maintained throughout the entire period. The vast majority of attacks were bombings, followed by arson, and then armed attacks on both individuals and groups. Other terrorist incident frequencies such as hijackings, hostage-taking, and kidnappings fluctuated significantly. In 1985 alone, 60 American citizens were seized, 13 of them through kidnapping. However, during the last few years in the decade, the number of Americans kidnapped decreased markedly.²⁰

The specific American individual targeted by terrorist changed during the 1980s. Going into the decade, businesses and businessmen were by far the most popular targets. This changed from 1980-1983 when government, diplomatic, and military personnel became the targets of choice. Examples of this new trend ranged from the killing of individuals such as Lieutenant

Colonel Charles Ray in Paris to the destruction of the Marine Barracks in Beirut as previously discussed.²¹

In 1984, terrorist groups changed their primary targets again. This time targets reverted back to being business facilities and personnel. However, during this same time a new type of terrorist target emerged, one that would shape the nature of terrorism into the 1990s. The new targets of terror included tourists and other non-official targets such as educators, administrators, and U.S. affiliated universities. This target shift was likely the result of greater security measures employed around diplomatic and military targets.²²

Regardless of the reason, the targeting of non-official U.S. personnel continued throughout the remainder of the 1980s. The effect was dramatic and the number of terrorist incidents grew from 29 in 1980, to 42 the next year, and eventually reached a decade high of 51 in 1982. Perhaps most surprising, these statistics revealed that of those killed and injured in 1982, the majority of them were murdered on U.S. soil.²³

The significant increase in terrorism, particularly within U.S. borders, was the primary catalyst for raising counterterrorism to the FBI's priority program in late 1982. The success of this program priority is difficult to assess. Particularly in terms of empirical data, it is extremely difficult to measure the deterrent effects of major law enforcement initiatives.²⁴

In the case of FBI focused counterterrorism efforts in the 1980s; however, the evidence is quite clear. There is little reason not to believe that the strong governmental efforts in thwarting terrorism had a profound effect on the levels of terrorism directed against Americans and U.S. targets for the remainder of the decade. In only one year, the level of terrorism dropped from the all time high in 1982 by forty percent in 1983. More revealing is that in a three year period from 1982 to 1985, the number of terrorists incidents directed against U.S. interests fell from fifty-one to only seven in 1985.²⁵

This trend of fewer terrorist incidents continued into the latter half of the 1980s. While there was an increase in 1986 to 25 incidents, the number waned during the remainder of the decade as there were only nine in 1987 and a ten-year low of only four in 1989. Had it not been for the emergence of environmental terrorists during the latter part of the decade, terrorism was practically non-existent during the late 1980s.²⁶

The tremendous decrease in terrorism is not only reflected by the overall decrease in the number of incidents but also by the number of deaths and injuries resulting from terrorism during the period. During the last three years of the decade there was not a single American death or injury attributable to terrorist bombs or assassins. This trend continued through 1990 and for the fourth consecutive year, no Americans were killed or injured as a result of terrorism.²⁷

In terms of terrorism, the first half of the 1990s was shaped by two major events: the fall of the Communist Party in Russia and the Gulf War. The U.S. intelligence community long contended that Soviet states actively supported terrorism despite continuous denials by the Soviet Union. Any controversy surrounding the issue was put to rest, however, in 1992. It was then when Russian President Boris Yeltsin, in attempting to discredit the Communist Party, released Central Committee documents that for the first time proved Russian support for terrorism. The documents clearly outlined steps for terrorist actions against U.S. and Israeli personnel in third world countries.²⁸

Following President Yeltsin's lead, it was very soon thereafter that other former Soviet states begin releasing similar documentation showing their participation in terrorism as well. Details were given for the first time conclusively outlining how various Eastern European countries provided terrorist groups training, equipment, facilities, safe havens, and transit to and from terrorist operations. Additionally, while the Soviet Union's fall did not reveal the existence of a well-coordinated "terrorist network" as the Reagan administration had once contended, it did show that various terrorist organizations were linked. The release of former Soviet information, coupled with the breakage in the aforementioned

terrorist link, significantly enhanced U.S. counterterrorism efforts into the 1990s.²⁹

During the Gulf War, there were numerous threats by Iraqi leadership that terrorist acts would be carried out within U.S. borders against American citizens. In response to these threats and fear of their validity at both the grassroots and the national levels, the FBI began a nationwide search to locate and round up Iraqi visitors whose visas had expired. This led to outrage and charges of harassment by Arab Americans. The mayor of Detroit became so caught up in the media's over exaggerations and frenzy that he declared the city an anti-terrorist state and requested the governor deploy the national guard to ensure his city's security.³⁰

Despite his threatening rhetoric, there were no major terrorist attacks as Saddam Hussein had called for during the war. There was no need for the National Guard to secure Detroit from Middle Eastern terrorists. However, as the U.S. entered into the 1990s, these events clearly demonstrated the power of the terrorist threat, as well as media and government willingness to react to its danger. Sadly, it also served as a warning for what the future would hold.

By the middle of the decade, the decline of international terrorism incidents that started with the demise of the Soviet Union continued. This is not to say that there was not terror or terrorism. On the contrary, the 1993 World Trade Center complex

bombing and the 1995 Oklahoma Federal bombing (a domestic incident) both served as grim and horrifying reminders of the deadly and indiscriminate nature of terrorism. Furthermore, in 1995 an incident occurred that, although not directed against U.S. interests, had a profound effect on how terrorism would be viewed for the remainder of the century. The release of Sarin gas, a chemical nerve agent, into Tokyo's crowded subway system sent shock waves throughout the world. The result of this single act resulted in the death of 12 civilians and left 3,807 seriously injured.³¹ Perhaps its most far-reaching effect, however, was that for the first time, a non-conventional terrorist weapon had been effectively used by terrorists against the general population.

Despite the high visibility incidents that occurred between 1993 and 1995, international terrorist rates did not increase overall. In 1996, international terrorist incidents fell to a 25-year low. In fact the vast majority of international terrorist acts during the decade were not directed against Americans at all.³²

Incidents occurred most often in Europe due to the conflicts in Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia. The casualties from international terrorism were from a very few spectacular events like the World Trade Center bombing. In fact, all but one of the 1,007 casualties that occurred in North America from 1991-1997 was a result of that single event. This trend was the

first sign of a rather evolutionary change in the application of terrorism. In the 1990s, for the first time in the century, the U.S. experienced a significant decline in terrorist incidents while still recording a large increase in the number of casualties.³³

The 1990s again saw businesses replace governments as terrorists' primary targets. For example, internationally in 1996 there were 296 total terrorist incidents recorded of which 227 were against businesses and 41 targeted governments. Of these 41 governmental targets, 35 were against civilians and 6 were military. Terrorist attacks against the U.S. during the same year were similar. Fifty-six attacks were carried out against the U.S. in 1996 with 50 of them targeting businesses and six directed against U.S. government targets.³⁴

It is statistically significant that of these 1996 attacks, four of the six (67 percent) terrorist attacks against the U.S. government were directed against the U.S. military. This compared to a military to government terrorist target ratio of only 14 percent internationally. Even more revealing perhaps is that the U.S. military was targeted in more than two of every three terrorist attacks against the total military targets attacked for the year.³⁵

One of these attacks in particular, the June 1996 bombing of Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, was particularly effective and killed 19 U.S. servicemen. More important than the

number of casualties, this incident once again showed, if nothing else, the effectiveness of a simple terrorist bomb against the most powerful military the world has ever known.³⁶

In 1997, the trends from the previous year continued. There were 304 international acts of terrorism for the year. While this total was eight more than in 1986, it was still one of the lowest annual totals in over 25 years. Approximately one third of the attacks were against U.S. targets; however, the total number of Americans killed or injured from these attacks was much smaller than in the previous year. During 1997 the trend for targeting businesses also continued, primarily in Latin America, as did the predominate type of terrorist attack, usually low-level bombing.³⁷

Despite the decrease in terrorist incidents during the first two thirds of the decade, terrorism was far from being totally contained. The events of 7 August 1998, served as a reminder of this when terrorist bombs simultaneously ripped through United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killing 224 people including 12 Americans. Following these incidents, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, expressed her great concern and referred to terrorism as the greatest threat facing the U.S. both now as well as for the next century.³⁸ Recently, President Bill Clinton echoed this same assessment, thus, making it clear from a national security perspective, the most formidable foe facing the U.S. in the future is not another state, but rather terrorism.

TERRORISM: Y2K AND BEYOND

Terrorism has been an enemy of the U.S. for some fifty years and arguably its nature has changed relatively little during the same time period. The primary terrorist tactics have remained virtually the same: kidnappings/hostage taking, armed assaults, low-level bombings, and assassinations. Despite significant declines in both the number of incidents and the casualties resulting from them over the last thirteen years, the concern from a U.S. security perspective has never been higher.

This great concern is based on the belief of how the nature of terrorism has changed, particularly during the last few years of the 1990s. Simply based on incident/casualty statistics, the Administration's great concern seems unfounded; however, in this case, the Clinton Administration is not wrong. On the contrary, the terrorism we will face in the new millennium will not be the same we faced over the last fifty years. No, this terrorism will be the greatest threat facing U.S. security in the coming century because it has evolved into something new and different. Specifically, its changes in capabilities and personality will create a unique species of terror more deadly than America ever combated in its past.

CAPABILITIES

Perhaps the most dramatic component of the newly evolved terrorist threat, is the vast increase in his capabilities. These

enhancements are primarily found in the tremendous improvements manifested in communications and media technologies, and in the destructive effects of modern weaponry. Because of these improved capabilities, even small-scale terrorist operations are now capable of having spectacular and far-reaching effects both in terms of violence and in media reach due to satellite communications.³⁹ The most frightening of all destructive capabilities available to the new species of terrorist are provided through using nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. These three types of weapons are normally referred to as Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

For the last ten years, the fear of terrorists and criminals using WMD has been limited to movies and novels such as those written by Tom Clancy. However, when the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo cult released the nerve agent sarin into the Tokyo subway system in 1995, the idea of terrorist WMD use became much less novel. Luckily, there were very few casualties as compared to what there easily could have been.⁴⁰

In the 1993 bombing of the World trade Center in New York, there are many analysts who believe the bombs used contained cyanide that was burned during the initial explosion. Again, the casualties were much fewer than they potentially might have been. Unfortunately, sometime in the future a terrorist group is going to be fully competent in carrying out its mission. When a capable terrorist group decides its goal is to devastate American

policymakers, inflicting tremendous damage through WMD may become a viable option.⁴¹ When that day comes, what was once thrilling entertainment on the big screen, will become a horrifying reality.

In the new millennium, weapons of mass destruction will not represent new technologies. Chemical weapons were used in World War One and as recently as 1988 by Iraq against Iranian troops and Kurdish civilians.⁴² Nuclear Weapons have been in existence since 1945 and are often credited with ending World War Two and as being the primary deterrent in preventing a World War Three. Biological weapons were used in warfare during ancient times and throughout history but were largely forgotten after their use was banned in 1982. If these weapons are not new, and the devastating consequences of their use against an unprepared civilian population are well known, why then do they represent such a serious "new" threat? The answer to this question is really quite simple. In the case of chemical and biological weapons, it is simply they are becoming more and more available.

Discussions concerning the WMD availability issue as recently as 10 years ago were largely confined to academics and a small number of policymakers. In the middle of the 1990s, however, these discussions began reaching a far larger audience. In 1996, former Senator Sam Nunn warned, "As we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, there is perhaps no greater threat

to this nation, and indeed the world's national security than the illicit spread of mass destruction weapons."⁴³

Former CIA director John Deutch also addressed this issue in March of 1996 when he told Congress' Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the tremendous demand for chemical and biological weapons in the world. When speaking at a public conference two months later he added, "materials and knowledge to build chemical and biological weapons are today more than ever available. The possibility that a state or any entity will use these weapons against the United States' interest is today more probable than in the past. This is a dangerous and immediate threat."⁴⁴

The RAND Corporations' "Chronology of International Terrorism" revealed that only 52 out of the possible 8000 recorded terrorist plots involved the use of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.⁴⁵ Still, if only one of these weapons had been used successfully to inflict very large civilian casualties, what would the affect have been? At the very least, such an event would have been catastrophic by any definition.

Since the RAND chronology, the availability of these weapons has increased and all indications are that they will continue this trend into the future. Law enforcement officials report that there is a growing interest in WMD weapons from non-state actors. In the first nine months of 1998 alone, the FBI opened more than 86 separate inquiries to investigate the alleged or

actual use of MWD materials in the United States. This represents a tremendous increase of such incidents over the previous year.⁴⁶ Is it any wonder that many predict it is just a matter of time before the wealthy Islamic extremist group backer, Osama bin Laden, is able to procure the nuclear or chemical weapons he desires?⁴⁷

In the new millennium, terrorists will be able to obtain the technologies required for WMD. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Deborah Lee maintains that not only will such events occur, but that they will also be extremely difficult to detect and deter. She says very strongly, "Counterterrorism specialists define the problem not as a question of if, but of when and where such attacks will take place."⁴⁸

Biological and chemical weapons are very easy to produce and amazingly inexpensive to make using commercially available products. They may also be produced in small facilities unlikely to arouse suspicion. Nuclear materials, while much more difficult to obtain, will become more available as Russia's economy and infrastructure continue to deteriorate well into the next decade. Perhaps most frightening, however, is not the relative ease in which the new breed of terrorist will be able to obtain MWD, but rather his willingness to use them and cause such devastating casualties with this type weapon.⁴⁹

TERRORISM'S NEW BREED

Terrorism in the new millennium, although firmly linked to its past, will display characteristics previously not seen in the genre. The 1990s foretold of this newly evolved species and provided glimpses of how it would be different from the terrorism of the past. Although it appears the World Trade Center bombing, the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing, and the Olympic Park bombing in Atlanta were completely unrelated, they revealed a disturbing new personality trait in U.S. terrorism. These acts were not aimed at any specific individuals or groups of people. Quite the contrary, their targets were apparently random in nature and their purposes were to inflict as many casualties as possible.⁵⁰

Seemingly, the primary goal in all three bombing incidents was the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians. Furthermore, in all three cases, unlike prior terrorist incidents, there appeared to be no political objectives ever seriously considered. Historically, casualties were a necessary, although often unfortunate result of terrorism. In the 1990s, groups began committing violent acts for the sake of violence alone and capitalizing on the effects they would cause.

Terrorism directed against America in the past always had a political goal as its primary motivator. In the case of the new terrorist threat, this component is often missing completely. In July and August of 1998, over 100 government, industry, and

intelligence professionals from five continents met for the Tenth Annual Symposium on Criminal Justice Issues to discuss the past, present, and future of terrorism. In particular, they discussed the "bewildering and unprecedented" global growth of terrorism and its evolving non-political nature. Peter Probst, a Defense Department international crime specialist said, "Ten years ago, terrorist groups were politically motivated, now you have a whole new range of groups."⁵¹

New terrorism dimensions will be created through the extremely violent acts of small groups. Profound changes have already taken place in international terrorist group organizations, their targets, and their operations. In the 1970s and 1980s, terrorism was usually related in some way to Communism. In the 1990s, terrorist acts were often associated with religious fundamentalism be it Christian, Jewish, Islamic, or Hindu. The new breed of terrorism will have no clear boundaries, no clear links to ideological tenets, and no discernable patterns.⁵²

Yonah Alexandria, George Washington University's counterterrorism expert, called the new terrorism's mode of operations a "well organized disorganization, where local operations are directed by state sponsored intelligence services, through tiers of family members and visitors and staged by difficult to penetrate human resource pools."⁵³ On the high tech end, operational messages may be communicated through elaborate

and secure computer networks or, at the low-tech spectrum, carried all over the world by members who move with immigrant populations. In this fashion, messages could describe "family events and greetings," which would make them virtually indiscernible to counterterrorism officers.⁵⁴

These trends present an extremely disturbing picture of the terrorists of the new millennium. Besides being less politically motivated and more prone to indiscriminate violence, the new breed of terrorist will be much younger than his historical predecessor. This dynamic will result in terrorists with values not clearly formed and who are less likely to be persuaded by logic.⁵⁵

As a whole, this group will be less rational and much more emotional than the terrorists of the past. They will also be more likely to "blindly" follow the orders of their leaders without questioning them or their intent. This trait is particularly disturbing. Those who were "just following orders" carried out the Holocaust and others of the world's greatest atrocities.⁵⁶

Terrorists of the next century will have been weaned on violence in many ways. For them, traditional social norms regarding violent acts will simply not apply. Many will have seen their homes and families destroyed. Violence for them will be an extremely personal and routine experience. Even in the West, violence will be more easily accepted due to a generation

desensitized by experiencing a lifetime of violent media and entertainment. Violence will no longer be viewed as a "means" but rather as an acceptable "end." The resulting deaths of innocents will evolve from being a consequence, to being the ultimate goal; hence, there will be no appealing to this new breed's conscious.

CONCLUSION

It is true there have been fewer international terrorist incidents recently. The numbers of casualties per incident, however, have greatly increased as terrorists have evolved and successfully employed more lethal weapons. There is no reason to believe this trend will change significantly in the future. It is also true that international terrorism incidents have been more or less rare on U.S. soil. However, the relative territorial immunity we have enjoyed in the past cannot be a certainty for the twenty-first century. In the coming millennium, U.S. stability will be jeopardized by an evolved terrorist threat that will bring a new breed to terrorism to America.

The twenty-first century's terrorist will be a formidable and dangerous foe. His youth, non-political nature, and predisposition towards casually accepting violence will make him different from the terrorists who were active even as recently as the middle of this decade. His inclination to destroy and kill innocents, normally in very large numbers, will make him unlike

any other species found in nature. These characteristics, combined with the incredible lethality of the modern weapon capabilities at his disposal, will make him the most deadly threat facing the U.S. in the new millennium.

Predicting the future of terrorism is very difficult, if not impossible. Extremely small groups of people, even individuals, can dramatically alter terrorist trends and leave any predictive efforts falling far short of their intended goals. What is certain, is that as the nature of terrorism evolves, so must U.S. policy and the programs to combat that threat.

At no time on record has terrorism significantly altered the course of human history. Still, there is the ever-increasing possibility, particularly with WMD, that a single, violent act could cause political tremors capable of shaking the very foundations of American society. Simple attempts to control this evolutionary threat will not prove successful. With stakes so high, the new breed of terrorism must be brought to extinction before it is able to evolve again.

WORD COUNT = 5800

ENDNOTES

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⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

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⁹ Charters, 174.

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¹³ Tucker, 23.

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⁴³ Sam Nunn, "Revisiting the New World Disorder," New Perspectives Quarterly, Winter 1996, 32.

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